

INTRODUCING MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY'S FALL 1999 FRESHMAN CLASS: A SUMMARY OF THE COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAM (CIRP) FRESHMAN SURVEY

This is the first in a series of Institutional Research Reports summarizing the results of the national Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey that Montclair State University participated in this summer. The survey is extensive and questions range from demographic background information to students' political views, high school behaviors and college expectations.

Over 2,700 higher education institutions take part in this national survey. The large number of participants allows the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA to send MSU three sets of frequencies summarizing 1) our freshman responses, 2) nationally normed results for similar four-year medium-selective public institutions (the classification is determined by HERI) and 3) all four-year public institutions participating in the study. The comparative frequencies help place our own figures in perspective. If there are significant differences between MSU responses and those from other four-year medium-selective public institutions, the comparative percents will also be included in these reports. When helpful, findings from The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 1999, the summary report prepared by the CIRP staff will be included.

The Sample

With the help of the New Student Experience Program, the Institutional Research Office administered the Freshman Survey to almost all entering Fall 1999 full-time freshmen during freshman orientation week. Two sessions were missed and the survey was administered by mail to those two groups of freshmen. Older adult and foreign students are not usually part of this set of orientation sessions. All told, 768 respondents, or 62.0 percent, of the entering freshman class responded (although each student did not answer every question). This is a good survey completion rate. The sample, or those responding, mirror the sex and racial/ethnic distribution of MSU's entering freshman class. The sample slightly under-represents African American freshmen and slightly over-represents Asian and White students.

What are the Demographic Characteristics of Entering Fall 1999 Freshmen?

- Slightly more than six out of ten MSU freshmen respondents, 62.4 percent, are female.
- A little over 12 percent identified themselves as African American, another 6.7 percent as Asian, 18.5 percent as Latino/a and 63.1 percent as White. Montclair's freshman class is more racially/ethnically diversified than the HERI-selected group of comparative medium selective four-year public institutions. At these institutions only 21 percent of freshmen identified themselves as African American, Asian or Latino/a.
- Three-quarters, 75.3 percent, are 18 when they enter college; an additional 18.2 percent are 19 years of age.
- Most freshmen report their permanent home is within a hundred-mile radius of the University: 49.2 percent report that MSU is 11 to 50 miles from their permanent home; another 18.8 percent say 6 to 10 miles; and 15.6 percent have their permanent homes 51 to 100 miles away. When asked where they expect to live during the fall term, 44.7 percent said with parents or relatives and 52.5 percent said in the college dorms. Freshmen at other four-year colleges tended to originate from distances farther from their colleges. About 60 percent reported their permanent residences were from 50-500 miles away. As well, 62.3 percent more expected to live in their college dorms.
- A little more than 10 percent report they hold permanent resident status (green cards) and 88.2 percent are U.S. citizens. A larger percentage, 96.9 percent, of the comparator group are U.S. citizens.
- Eighty percent report English is their native language compared to 93.0 percent at other similarly selective colleges.
- Students were asked about their current religious preferences. Table 1, below, lists the religious preferences from which students were able to choose, as well as the percent choosing that particular religion. Almost half, 49.4 percent, of MSU's freshmen reported they were Roman Catholic. The comparable figure at other medium-selective colleges was 32.3 percent.

Table 1 Freshmen's Religious Choices, %s

Religious Choice:	MSU %	Other 4 Yr. Medium- Selective %
Baptist	6.5	10.9
Buddhist	0.4	1.0
Eastern Orthodox	1.4	0.5
Episcopal	1.3	1.1
Islamic	2.4	0.6
Jewish	1.5	0.8
LDS (Mormon)	0.1	0.5
Lutheran	2.4	6.2
Methodist	2.7	6.3
Presbyterian	2.5	4.1
Quaker	0.1	0.1
Roman Catholic	49.4	32.3
Seventh Day Adventist	0.8	0.3
United Church of Christ	0.4	1.5
Other Christian	9.7	14.3
Other Religion	6.1	3.3
None	12.1	16.0

- Almost a quarter, 23.1 percent, of MSU freshmen report their parents' income as less than \$25,000 a year. More female than male respondents fell into this income category, 27.3 percent and 16.8 percent, respectively. Only 14 percent of the comparator group fell into this income category and the gender difference was only slight. Slightly more than half of MSU freshmen report their family income as \$50,000 or more and 26 percent report it as over \$75,000. Table 2, below, summarizes family income information. (Respondents were asked to give their best estimate of their parents' total income last year. They were to consider income from all sources before taxes.)

Table 2 Family Income Levels, %s

Income Categories:	MSU %	Other 4-Yr Medium- Selective %
Less than \$19,999	17.5	9.6
\$20,000 to \$24,999	5.6	4.4
\$25,000 to \$29,999	4.0	4.5
\$30,000 to \$39,999	9.0	9.5
\$40,000 to \$49,999	12.3	11.2
\$50,000 to \$59,999	10.6	12.5
\$60,000 to \$74,999	15.0	15.9
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.4	15.1
\$100,000 to \$149,999	9.0	11.5
\$150,000 or more	2.5	5.8

What are the Political and Social Views of Entering Freshmen?

Over half, 53.4 percent, of MSU’s freshmen characterized their political views as middle-of-the road; the corresponding percentage for other four-year medium-selective colleges is 58.7. MSU freshmen are a good deal more liberal, 31.5 percent vs 21.7 percent and somewhat less conservative, 11.1 percent vs 16.5 percent than freshmen at other four-year medium-selective colleges (our comparator group).

Freshmen were also asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a list of items that may be characterized as tapping into current social issues or concerns. Table 3 reports the percent of those who agreed strongly or somewhat with these various items, for male and female MSU freshmen as well as for all (total) MSU respondents and the comparator group of other four-year public medium-selective colleges.

Table 3 Percent Agreeing Strongly or Somewhat with Various Social Issues

Social issues:	% Agreeing Strongly or Somewhat			Other 4-Yr Medium- Selective Total
	Montclair State University		Total	
	Male	Female		
There is too much concern in the courts for the rights of criminals	79.1	68.9	72.7	73.1
Abortion should be legal	58.0	59.3	58.8	53.2
The death penalty should be abolished	31.9	29.4	30.3	24.4
If two people really like each other, it’s all right to have sex even if they’ve known each other for a very short time	62.9	36.1	45.9	38.3
Marijuana should be legalized	43.5	32.4	36.5	31.4
It is important to have laws prohibiting homosexual relationships	29.1	13.1	19.0	26.3
Employers should be allowed to require drug testing of employees or job applicants	68.0	73.1	71.2	79.3
Just because a man thinks that a woman has “led him on” does not entitle him to have sex with her	74.7	89.0	83.8	89.6
The federal government should do more to control the sale of handguns	84.9	92.4	89.7	84.3
Racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America	24.9	22.0	23.1	21.7
Realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in our society	35.4	31.0	32.6	28.9
Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now	67.3	56.3	60.4	54.5
Colleges should prohibit racist/sexist speech on campus	61.5	65.0	63.7	63.5
Same sex couples should have the right to legal marital status	54.5	74.3	67.0	55.7
Material on the Internet should be regulated by the government	39.8	48.1	45.0	45.8
The activities of married women are best confined to the home & family	42.3	31.0	35.2	25.6
Affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished	51.7	41.7	45.5	48.4
People have the right to know about the personal lives of public figures	29.2	17.3	21.7	24.2

The liberal or less conservative political views of the MSU freshman class carry over to several of the social issues listed in Table 3, especially those dealing with sexual mores. For example, 19 percent of MSU freshmen and 26.3 percent of other four-year public medium-selective colleges strongly or somewhat agree that it is important to have laws prohibiting homosexual relationships. Two-thirds of MSU freshmen and 55.7 percent of the comparator colleges agree that same sex couples should have the right to legal marital status. As well, 58.8 percent of MSU freshmen and 53.2 percent of the comparator group strongly or somewhat agree that abortion should be legal. In a different vein, slightly more MSU freshmen feel that wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now, 60.4 percent and 54.5 percent, respectively.

Also of note is that 35.2 percent of MSU freshmen and 25.6 percent of the comparator group agree strongly or somewhat with the statement that “the activities of married women are best confined to the home and family.”

Entering female freshmen differ with males on a number of issues; two may be of particular note because MSU offers on-campus housing. Overall, 45.9 percent of entering freshmen agree strongly or somewhat with the statement, “if two people really like each other, it’s all right to have sex even if they’ve known each other for a very short time”. There is however, a considerable difference between male (62.9 percent) and female responses (36.1 percent) to this statement.

As well, there is high overall agreement (83.8 percent) with the statement “just because a man thinks that a woman has ‘led him on’ does not entitle him to have sex with her”. But again, more females (89.0 percent) than males (74.7 percent) agree strongly or somewhat with this statement.

Some other differences along gender lines are responses to legalizing marijuana, employers testing for drugs, legalizing marriages between same sex couples, affirmative action in college admissions and the appropriate activities of married women.

What are the Parental Background Characteristics of Entering Fall 1999 Freshmen?

The CIRP study asked freshmen three questions about their parents: mother and father’s religious preferences, their educational levels, and their occupations. Not surprisingly, the religious preferences of entering freshmen reflect the preferences of their parents; 55.4 percent of their mothers and 54.9 percent of their fathers are Roman Catholic.

Almost half of all parents have had some college experience. As Table 4 shows, 21 percent graduated from college and an additional 12 percent of the fathers and 10 percent of the mothers have graduate degrees. Almost a third of MSU’s entering freshmen are from families with parents who have successfully completed college by earning a bachelor’s or graduate degree. The comparable frequencies for other medium-selective four-year public institutions show similar proportions of college educated parents.

Table 4 Parents’ Background Characteristics: Educational Level and Occupations, %s

Educational Level:	Montclair State University		4 Yr Medium Selective	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Some high school or less	15.3	12.9	8.5	7.3
High school graduate	28.9	30.1	27.0	30.0
Some college	16.7	16.2	19.1	20.5
College degree	21.5	21.2	25.2	24.2
Graduate Degree	12.1	9.8	14.3	11.0
Other	5.5	9.8	5.9	7.0
Occupational Category:				
Business	24.5	13.5	26.5	14.5
Business (clerical)	0.6	7.6	1.0	8.6
Skilled worker	10.3	2.0	11.1	1.8
Engineer	6.3	0.9	9.0	0.4
Education (Elementary & Secondary)	5.0	12.3	3.9	13.7
Nurse	0.8	9.1	0.5	8.5
Homemaker (full-time)	0.3	9.8	0.2	10.0
Clergy/professor/M.D./research				
scientist/lawyer/health professional	3.9	3.4	4.7	3.8
Unemployed	3.2	8.2	2.4	5.1

The occupations of MSU freshman parents and those at other four-year medium-selective institutions show only slight differences. Most MSU freshmen have both parents in the labor force. Fathers have less unemployment than mothers, 3.2 percent and 8.2 percent, respectively. An additional 9.8 percent of mothers are full-time (at-home) homemakers.

Next Report: Academic Characteristics and High School Senior Year Activities of Entering Full-Time Freshmen

INTRODUCING MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY'S FALL 1999 FRESHMAN CLASS: A SUMMARY OF THE CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY

Academic Characteristics and Senior Year Activities of Entering Full-Time Freshmen

This is the second in a series of Institutional Research reports summarizing the results of the national CIRP Freshman Survey that Montclair State University participated in this summer. The survey is extensive and questions ranged from demographic background information to students' political views, high school behaviors and college expectations. This second report focuses on the questions respondents were asked about their high school academic achievements and high school senior year activities. As in the first report, if there are significant differences between MSU freshman responses and those from other four-year medium-selective public institutions, the comparative percents are also included.

Respondents were asked what was their average grade in high school? Twenty-five percent had between A- and A+ averages; but more females than males reported their grades were in the A- to A+ range, 28 and 20 percent, respectively.. Comparable four-year medium-selective public institutions reported 35 percent of entering freshmen had A range high school average grades. Slightly over 80 percent reported they had a B or better high school average. CIRP researchers cited this as an example of continuing high school grade inflation at the national level.

Thirty-six percent of MSU freshmen had some special tutoring or remedial work while in high school: 11.8 percent in mathematics, 6.4 percent in English, 5.7 percent in reading, 5.5 percent in science, 4.0 percent in foreign languages and 2.9 percent had help with social studies. Asked if they felt they would need any special help or remedial work in college, 22.9 percent said they felt they would need help in mathematics; 14.5 percent thought they would need help with a foreign language; 9.8 percent with English; 9.6 percent with reading; 9.4 percent with science and 3.9 percent with social studies. Female respondents are more likely to feel they will need help with math, 25.3 percent compared to 19 percent for males. Male students expect to find language studies somewhat more of a challenge, 18.3 compared to 12.1 percent for females.

Freshmen were asked how much time they spent in a typical week doing a range of activities from studying/doing homework to socializing with friends during their last year in high school. Table 1 summarizes the time spent in each activity. Freshmen were engaged in a variety of activities outside of the classroom in their last year of high school. Eighty percent worked for pay, with nearly 44 percent indicating they worked 16 or more hours per week. Nearly everyone socialized with friends; 39 percent reported they spent more than 16 hours a week with their friends. Sixty-two percent reported they spent some time volunteering. Female students engaged in volunteer activities more frequently than male students; 65.4 percent of females and 56.1 percent of males volunteered during the senior year. While most watched TV, less than half played video games. Male respondents were much more likely to play video games than females. Forty-three percent of students report they talked with teachers outside of the classroom for an hour a week. Perhaps reflecting the slower pace of senior year in high school, most students put less than five hours a week into studying and doing homework; only 28.7 percent reported they studied for six or more hours a week. CIRP researchers, in their summary of the national data, point to this last item as one of the indicators of student academic disengagement.

Table 1 Percent of Freshmen Spending Time in Activities in a Typical Week During the Last Year of High School

Activities:	% of Hours Spent:							
	None	< One	1 to 2	3 to 5	6 to 10	11 to 15	16 to 20	Over 20
Studying/homework	4.5 %	16.4%	22.2%	28.2%	16.4%	5.7%	3.6%	3.0%
Socializing with friends	0.8	2.4	5.6	16.1	19.6	16.6	11.0	28.0
Talk w/ teachers outside of class	10.2	42.6	26.6	11.4	3.9	2.9	0.6	1.8
Exercise or sports	6.8	9.9	17.0	21.2	13.1	12.3	7.7	12.0
Partying	15.2	10.2	15.5	22.4	17.3	8.3	3.8	7.2
Working (for pay)	19.5	2.3	3.0	5.4	10.8	14.9	20.3	23.8
Volunteer work	38.0	16.5	21.7	12.4	4.8	3.2	0.9	2.4
Student clubs/groups	24.7	13.7	24.1	18.3	10.0	4.5	2.0	2.7
Watching TV	5.1	12.5	21.3	27.9	15.5	6.8	3.2	7.8
Housework/childcare	18.6	16.9	28.1	19.1	7.9	3.8	2.0	3.6
Reading for pleasure	23.8	28.2	22.1	14.2	5.6	3.6	0.9	1.7
Playing video games	54.7	17.1	13.6	6.1	3.9	2.3	0.9	1.4
Prayer/meditation	34.1	32.6	18.3	6.8	2.9	1.8	0.5	3.2

MSU freshmen and those from other four-year medium-selective public institutions are relatively similar in the amount of time they spend in the designated activities. The only significant difference between the two groups is that more MSU freshmen have had some experience participating in student clubs or groups. Seventy-five percent of our freshmen reported they spent some amount of time in this activity compared to 66 percent for the comparative institutions.

Respondents were also asked if they had participated frequently, occasionally or never during the past year in a list of activities. Table 2 summarizes these responses. (Percentages reported to MSU by HERI, the Institute that processes the surveys, are for those responding frequently or occasionally. Where indicated by an asterisk, *, responses are for only those responding frequently). Three broad areas are highlighted: computer proficiency, academically-related activities/behaviors and health or student well-being issues.

Table 2 Percent of Freshmen Indicating They Participated in Activity During the Past Year

Activities:	% Frequently/Occasionally Participating:			Other 4-Yr Medium- Selective
	Montclair State University Male	Female	Total	Total
Studied with other students	79.0%	84.7%	82.6%	86.8%
Attended a religious service	72.5	81.9	78.5	81.5
Attended a public recital or concert	71.5	75.5	74.0	76.1
Performed volunteer work	66.9	76.4	72.9	76.0
Read the editorial page in the daily newspaper	63.9	59.0	60.8	59.2
Came late to class	65.3	57.1	60.1	65.6
Visited an art gallery or museum	53.9	59.1	57.2	51.6
Drank wine or liquor	53.6	57.1	55.8	53.0
Participated in organized demonstrations	51.5	56.4	54.6	49.5
Tutored another student	45.9	51.9	49.7	47.9
Performed community service as part of a class	46.4	51.0	49.7	51.0
Drank beer	52.5	46.4	48.6	48.6
Played a musical instrument	41.9	34.6	37.3	35.6
Played chess	53.4	24.6	35.1	33.2
Overslept and missed class or an appointment	40.1	28.0	32.5	35.4
Was a guest in a teacher's home	25.4	25.1	25.2	26.2
Took a prescribed anti-depressant	8.3	7.0	7.5	4.4
Socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group *	72.6	80.3	77.5	64.2
Used a personal computer *	59.2	55.0	56.6	63.3
Used the Internet for research or homework *	52.1	52.5	52.3	56.3
Communicated via e-mail *	47.0	46.1	46.5	51.0
Was bored in class *	39.0	40.3	39.9	41.1
Other Internet use *	41.3	33.6	36.4	37.0
Felt overwhelmed by all I had to do *	20.3	37.9	31.4	30.5
Discussed religion *	26.8	25.6	26.0	25.3
Participated in Internet chat rooms *	27.7	24.0	25.3	22.4
Asked a teacher for advice after class *	24.0	24.7	24.5	22.1
Played computer games *	29.9	19.0	23.0	25.2
Voted in a student election *	23.3	19.4	20.8	20.6
Checked out a book or journal from the school library *	15.8	20.2	18.6	17.4
Discussed politics *	17.7	11.1	13.5	13.4
Felt depressed *	11.7	13.9	13.1	7.9
Smoked cigarettes *	9.1	13.9	12.1	12.5

Over half, 56.6 percent, report they frequently used a personal computer and 52.3 percent frequently used the Internet for research or homework. (In contrast, 18.6 percent said they frequently checked out a book or journal from the school library.) Respondents also frequently communicated via e-mail, 46.5 percent. Slightly more freshmen at other medium-selective colleges are starting college with the experience of using personal computers.

Eight out of ten respondents reported they studied with other students frequently or occasionally. Almost half tutored another student or performed community service as part of a class during the past year. Over three-quarters of our freshmen reported they

frequently socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group. This is a significantly larger percent than the 64.2 percent for similar medium-selective four-year colleges.

As well, 60 percent said that they occasionally or frequently came late to class and 40 percent said they were frequently bored in class during the past year. The national summary put out by CIRP cited these last two factors as indicators of student academic disengagement.

Respondents were also engaged in a number of extracurricular activities during the past year. They frequently or occasionally attended a public recital or concert, 78.5 percent; read the editorial page in the daily paper, 60.8 percent; and visited an art gallery or museum, 57.2 percent.

Almost a third, 31.4 percent, said they felt overwhelmed by all they had to do. Mirroring the national trend, a larger percent of female respondents reported this than male respondents, 37.9 percent and 20.3 percent, respectively. A smaller percentage, 13.1, said they frequently felt depressed and 7.5 percent reported they frequently or occasionally took a prescribed anti-depressant.

Over half, 55.8 percent, drank wine or liquor and slightly under half, 48.6 percent, drank beer frequently or occasionally during the past year. While there were some differences between males and females they were not large. Entering MSU women are consuming alcohol in nearly the same amounts as men. MSU's results are similar to those in the national survey trends analysis. Nationally, 53.8 percent report drinking wine or liquor frequently or occasionally and 50.7 percent drank beer with the same frequency. The national study reports that these figures are a continuation of a downward trend in student drinking.

Students were also asked to compare themselves to the average person of his or her age on a range of academic and personal traits such as academic ability, intellectual self-confidence, social self-confidence, etc. At the national level the authors point out that there is a record level of "academic self-confidence" among freshmen. Table 3 shows the percent of MSU freshmen rating themselves above average or in the highest 10 percent for these various skills and abilities. MSU's freshmen mirror the national summary results.

Table 3 Percent of Freshmen Rating Themselves Above Average or in Top 10 Percent

Ability/traits:	% Above Average or in Top 10 Percent			
	Montclair State University		Other 4-Yr Medium- Selective	
	Male	Female	Total	Total
Academic ability	61.8	55.9	58.1	61.6
Artistic ability	35.9	29.9	32.1	26.3
Computer skills	38.4	22.6	28.4	30.8
Competitiveness	71.5	45.2	54.9	55.1
Cooperativeness	73.5	69.4	70.8	73.7
Creativity	64.4	52.9	57.1	54.1
Drive to achieve	71.0	67.8	69.0	67.1
Emotional health	60.7	42.4	49.1	54.1
Initiative	49.4	44.8	46.5	49.2
Leadership ability	63.7	50.1	55.1	57.7
Mathematical ability	46.5	32.5	37.6	37.6
Physical health	62.0	39.6	47.7	56.0
Popularity	54.1	32.9	40.6	38.8
Public speaking ability	38.1	31.5	33.9	33.5
Self-confidence (intellectual)	66.0	47.1	54.0	56.3
Self-confidence (social)	57.3	41.2	47.1	51.8
Self-understanding	64.9	51.1	56.2	54.6
Spirituality	44.6	41.0	42.3	42.4
Understanding of others	65.3	66.1	65.8	65.4
Writing ability	44.6	45.9	45.4	42.6

There are differences in how males and females rate themselves. For all but two abilities or traits (writing ability and understanding of others), male students rated themselves more frequently as above average or in the top ten percent than female students. For some abilities such as computer skills, competitiveness, creativity, emotional health, leadership ability, mathematical ability, intellectual and social self-confidence and self-understanding the differences in self perceptions are more than minor ones.

Next Report: Admission Choices, Personal Objectives, College Expectations and Expenses

5/1/00

INTRODUCING MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY'S FALL 1999 FRESHMAN CLASS: A SUMMARY OF THE CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY

Personal Objectives, Admission Choices, College Aspirations, Expectations and Expenses of Entering Full-Time Freshmen

This is the third and last in a series of Institutional Research reports summarizing the results of the national CIRP Freshman Survey that Montclair State University participated in last summer. The survey is extensive and questions ranged from demographic background information to students' political views, high school behaviors and college expectations. This particular report focuses on the questions freshmen were asked about their life goals, the factors that affected their decision to attend college in general and Montclair State University specifically, expected career and major choices and how they will pay for college. As in previous reports, if there are significant differences between MSU freshman responses and those from other four-year medium-selective public institutions, the comparative percents are also included. When of interest, national summary figures are also presented.

What are Students' Personal Life Objectives?

Freshmen were asked to indicate which objectives they considered to be essential or very important to them. Table 1 summarizes this information. For this table the national figures are included because several of these objectives -- influencing social values, participating in community action programs, helping others who are in difficulty -- were cited by the national summary report as examples of a declining commitment to social activism.

Table 1 Percent of Freshmen Considering Various Objectives Essential or Very Important

Objectives:	% Considering Essential or Very Important				
	Montclair State University			Med Select	Nat'l Total
	Male	Female	Total	Total	Total
Being very well off financially	76.3%	75.9%	76.1%	75.3%	73.4%
Raising a family	70.1	73.3	72.1	72.8	71.3
Becoming an authority in my field	68.4	65.0	66.3	58.2	58.7
Helping others who are in difficulty	66.8	68.6	67.9	59.6	59.0
Obtain recognition from colleagues for contributions to my special field	66.2	57.1	60.6	49.7	49.6
Becoming successful in a business of my own	52.2	44.9	47.6	35.3	38.3
Having administrative responsibility for the work of others	51.7	38.5	43.5	34.7	35.3
Influencing social values	44.6	41.3	42.5	34.3	35.8
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	43.0	40.7	41.6	36.5	39.7
Helping to promote racial understanding	39.0	36.6	37.5	25.3	28.4
Becoming a community leader	38.5	24.8	30.0	26.1	28.0
Integrating spirituality into my life	38.1	40.4	39.5	38.1	42.5
Keeping up to date with political affairs	35.9	19.9	26.0	22.2	26.0
Influencing the political structure	26.3	18.7	21.6	13.5	16.7
Writing original works (poems, novels, short stories, etc.)	26.3	22.8	24.1	12.8	14.0
Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	25.9	21.0	22.8	14.7	17.9
Creating artistic work (painting, sculpture, decorating, etc.)	25.4	20.2	22.1	12.9	14.7
Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts (acting, dancing)	25.2	21.2	22.7	13.0	13.1
Participating in a community action program	25.2	25.3	25.2	17.6	21.3
Making a theoretical contribution to science	24.1	17.8	20.2	12.5	15.5

For MSU freshmen, helping others who are in difficulty is considered essential or very important by 67.9 percent, almost eight percent higher than for the national sample or for other four-year public medium-selective colleges. Currently, there is no past MSU CIRP information available against which to test the national trend of a declining interest in social activism. What we can say with certainty is that there is a higher level of commitment to social activism in our Fall 1999 freshmen than at the national level. Influencing social values and participating in community action programs were also more frequently chosen as important life goals by MSU freshmen than those making up the national group.

Slightly over seven out of ten MSU freshmen said they considered being very well off financially and raising a family as essential or very important personal objectives. Two-thirds felt that becoming an authority in one's field and helping others who are in difficulty

were also highly important objectives. The top four objectives are equally important to male and female freshmen. As well, 60.6 percent felt obtaining recognition from colleagues for contributions to one's field is also an essential or very important objective. Males report this as somewhat more important to them than females do. There are several other objectives -- becoming successful in a business of my own, having administrative responsibility for the work of others, becoming a community leader, keeping up with political affairs -- that show a difference in importance for male and female freshmen. Males more frequently report they consider these as essential or very important objectives. Also of note is the higher importance MSU freshmen put on creating art and becoming proficient in the performance arts than either of the two comparator groups. This probably reflects MSU's continuing reputation as a center of excellence for the arts.

What are Freshmen's Higher Education Aspirations?

Freshmen were asked what was the highest degree they planned to pursue anywhere and then, specifically which degree(s) did they plan to earn at MSU. In general a quarter plan to earn a bachelor's degree, 49.0 percent said a master's degree, 12.5 percent a doctoral degree, 6.4 percent some kind of medical degree and 1.9 percent a law degree. Sixty-two percent expect to earn their bachelor's degree here at MSU, 25.6 percent a masters and 3.8 percent a doctorate. Slightly more freshmen, 68.0 percent, at other medium-selective four-year colleges plan to earn a bachelors degree at the college they are currently attending.

Two-thirds of the respondents said MSU was their first choice for the colleges they wanted to attend and an additional 26.5 percent said it was their second choice. While this is in line with other four-year public colleges it is seven percent lower than other medium-selective public four-year institutions. Twelve percent applied to no other college than MSU for admission. The comparable percent for other medium-selective colleges is 25.5 percent. Almost a quarter of our freshmen applied to three other colleges (in addition to MSU) and 14.8 percent applied to four additional institutions.

Students were asked how important they thought nine different factors were to the admittance process. Table 2 summarizes their responses. Freshmen feel that the two major factors in the college admissions process are high school grades and standardized test scores.

Table 2 Percent Indicating What They Think is Important for College Admissions

Factor:	% Indicating Degree of Importance			
	Montclair State University		4-Yr Medium Selective Colleges	
	A lot	Some	A lot	Some
High school grades	69.1%	26.0%	63.4%	31.9%
Standardized test scores	48.6	42.3	43.0	47.5
Extracurricular activities	28.7	57.4	28.7	18.8
Letters of recommendation	26.1	58.6	13.2	48.6
Application essay	25.4	61.3	11.8	40.6
Athletic talent	9.7	44.8	7.2	36.9
Musical/artistic talent	9.3	39.9	4.1	37.9
Volunteer work	9.3	54.9	6.2	45.6
Race/ethnicity	6.3	23.1	3.8	17.4

Why Are Freshmen Attending College?

Respondents were asked to choose from a list of 13 possible reasons for attending college. As Table 3 shows, three-quarters report that getting training for a specific career played a very important part in their decision to go to college and seven out of ten said the ability to make more money was very important. A large percentage, 60.7, also see their undergraduate degrees from MSU as preparation for an advanced degree. But just as important was "to learn more about things that interest me" and "to gain a general education and appreciation of ideas". A college education is serving two equally important purposes for MSU freshmen: as a means to insure a livelihood as well as a place of discovery about one's surroundings and self. The latter is more prevalent among our freshmen than for other comparable (four-year public medium-selective) institutions.

Table 3 Percent Responding Reason Is Very Important in Deciding to Go to College

Reason:	% Responding			4 Yr Med Sel Total
	Montclair State University			
	Male	Female	Total	
To get training for a specific career	71.4%	78.8%	76.1%	75.5%
To learn more about things that interest me	70.3	78.1	75.2	71.2
To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas	68.7	72.9	71.3	58.0
To be able to make more money	73.0	70.3	71.3	71.3
To be able to get a better job	67.5	70.1	69.2	73.2
To prepare myself for graduate or professional school	53.8	64.6	60.7	50.6
To improve my reading and study skills	46.4	48.2	47.6	38.9
To make me a more cultured person	39.3	45.4	43.2	31.9
My parents wanted me to go	35.8	37.5	36.9	32.3
A mentor/role model encouraged me to go	18.8	15.7	16.9	11.2
Wanted to get away from home	16.3	15.9	16.0	18.8
I could not find a job	5.7	6.4	6.2	4.3
There was nothing better to do	7.7	2.2	4.2	2.3

What Factors are Important to a Freshman's Decision to Attend Montclair State University?

Table 4 lists the reasons noted as playing a very important role in a student's decision to attend Montclair State University.

Table 4 Percent Indicating Reason was Very Important in the Decision to Attend Montclair State University

Reason for Attending MSU:	% Saying Very Important			4 Yr Med Sel Total
	Montclair State University			
	Male	Female	Total	
This college has a very good academic reputation	51.2%	59.7%	56.4%	44.8%
This college's graduates get good jobs	48.6	47.9	48.1	43.0
This college has low tuition	38.7	45.3	42.8	28.4
I wanted to live near home	28.3	36.7	33.5	21.4
I was offered financial assistance	26.2	30.6	29.0	23.4
I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college	24.0	31.1	28.3	31.2
This college has a good reputation for its social activities	29.0	27.1	27.8	22.8
This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools	26.9	27.1	27.0	20.5
This college offers special educational programs	23.6	28.3	26.5	19.2
H.S. guidance counselor advised me	12.6	14.2	13.6	6.0
My relatives wanted me to come here	12.1	12.5	12.3	6.3
Private college counselor advised me	6.1	2.5	3.9	1.1
Information in a multi-college guidebook	9.5	11.5	10.7	3.7
Rankings in national magazines	9.0	9.7	9.4	3.9
My teacher advised me	8.9	9.6	9.3	2.9
Not offered aid by first choice	8.7	8.1	8.3	4.3
I was attracted by the religious affiliation of the college	4.1	4.3	4.2	1.6
Not accepted anywhere else	5.4	2.3	3.5	2.5

The three most important reasons for deciding to attend our University are: MSU's very good academic reputation, the belief that our graduates get good jobs and that the tuition is low. Freshmen are choosing MSU for academic quality and affordability and because an MSU degree leads to a good job after graduation. For a third, the proximity to their family homes was also a very important consideration; this is more of a consideration for female respondents. The low tuition was also noted more frequently by females as a reason for attending MSU.

What Careers and Majors do Freshmen Wish to Pursue?

The summary of the national results pointed to a growing interest in teaching and the arts. The authors commented that while not reaching the 1968 figure, the peak year, this year's freshman interest in elementary and secondary education reached a 30 year high; 11.2 percent indicated this area as their probable career. The top ten professions mentioned by MSU freshmen are listed in Table 5.

Table 5 Percent Indicating This Area as Their Probable Career

Careers:	% Indicating			4 Yr Med Sel Total
	Montclair State University			
	Males	Females	Total	
Business executive (management, administrator)	12.6%	7.9%	9.6%	8.2%
Teacher or administrator (elementary)	0.4	12.3	7.9	10.4
Teacher or administrator (secondary)	13.5	6.3	8.9	6.7
Computer programmer or analyst	11.7	2.4	5.8	5.3
Actor or entertainer	5.4	5.2	5.3	1.8
Physician	5.4	2.4	3.5	3.5
Business owner or proprietor	4.5	1.3	2.5	2.5
Accountant or actuary	4.5	5.5	5.1	2.7
Musician (performer, composer)	3.6	2.1	2.6	1.5
Artist	3.1	5.2	4.5	2.0
Undecided	10.3	16.5	14.2	12.8

A slightly larger percent than the national figure, about 16, indicated teaching as their probable career. This is certainly in keeping with MSU's long tradition of teacher education. Female respondents are more likely to choose elementary education as a career choice while males choose secondary education. The percent of MSU freshmen saying they wish to pursue a career in the arts is also higher than the percents found at the national level and for other four-year medium-selective colleges. Again, this makes a great deal of sense since MSU has been noted as a center of excellence in the arts. Finally, also of note is the 14.2 percent who are undecided. Women are somewhat more undecided than men about their career choices, 16.5 percent compared to 10.3 percent.

Table 6 Percent of Freshmen Choosing A Particular Major Area

Major Areas with Selected Majors:	MSU Total	4 Yr Med Sel Total
Arts and Humanities	19.1%	10.5%
Art, fine and applied	5.5	2.7
Music	2.3	1.5
Theatre or drama	4.8	1.4
Biological Science	7.8	4.8
Biology (general)	5.7	2.4
Business	18.2	13.4
Accounting	5.7	2.8
Business administration (general)	3.8	4.2
International business	2.5	1.2
Marketing	2.5	2.6
Management	2.2	3.3
Education	17.5	17.9
Elementary education	6.3	9.2
Physical education or recreation	4.8	1.8
Secondary education	3.8	4.2
Physical Science	1.1	2.0
Professional (e.g. physical therapy)	4.3	12.6
Social Science	7.6	8.7
Psychology	4.3	4.8
Technical (e.g. electronics)	1.4	2.5
Other Fields	11.3	10.1
Computer science	6.3	3.8
Undecided	12.6	9.3

Respondents were given a long list of possible majors and asked which one they thought might be their choice. Table 6 groups majors by area as well as showing percents for selected, individual majors. The top three areas in which freshmen think they will major are: the Arts and Humanities, 19.1 percent; Business, 18.2 percent; and Education, 17.5 percent. An additional 12.6 percent are undecided.

Another set of questions asked freshmen to speculate a bit on their actions during their upcoming college years, e.g., would they transfer to another institution, did they think they would complete their degrees, work full-time etc. Table 7 reports the percents for those freshmen saying the chances were “very good” that they would take part in this activity or behavior.

Table 7 Percent Reporting Chances are Very Good That He/She Will Participate In This Activity

Chances are very good that student will:	Montclair State University			4-Yr Medium Selective Total	National Total
	Male	Female	Total		
Change major field	17.4%	14.0%	15.3%	14.2%	11.8%
Change career choice	14.8	12.0	13.1	12.8	10.6
Fail one or more courses	1.7	1.8	1.8	0.9	1.5
Graduate with honors	22.2	19.5	20.5	14.9	17.3
Be elected to a student office	7.6	4.1	5.5	2.5	3.3
Get a job to help pay for college expenses	36.8	41.7	39.8	45.3	33.3
Work full-time while attending college	8.1	9.3	8.8	5.6	6.5
Join a social fraternity, sorority, or club	14.2	19.2	17.3	14.2	12.1
Play varsity/intercollegiate athletics	22.1	10.6	14.9	11.3	18.7
Be elected to an academic honor society	13.4	10.4	11.5	6.1	8.4
Make at least “B” average	47.6	52.4	50.6	48.9	47.9
Need extra time to complete your degree requirements	11.3	10.3	10.7	6.7	6.2
Get a bachelor’s degree	65.1	74.2	70.8	76.1	64.4
Participate in student protests or demonstrations	6.1	5.3	5.6	3.7	4.1
Drop out of this college temporarily (exclude transferring)	1.7	1.0	1.3	0.7	1.4
Drop out permanently (exclude transferring)	2.6	1.3	1.8	0.5	1.2
Transfer to another college before graduating	6.1	5.7	5.9	9.0	11.9
Be satisfied with your college	44.8	45.1	45.0	44.7	39.9
Get married while in college	4.3	5.8	5.2	4.6	3.8
Participate in volunteer or community service work	13.5	22.7	19.2	16.4	12.1
Seek personal counseling	12.6	10.2	11.1	4.6	3.8

The responses to this last set of questions re-enforce or augment many of the earlier findings. For example, freshmen are entering college with high expectations of how they will perform; 70.8 percent expect to get their bachelor’s degree, half expect to earn B averages and 20.5 percent expect to graduate with honors. Conversely, only 1.8 percent say that chances are very good that they will fail one or more courses and only 10.7 percent are pretty sure they will need some extra time to complete their degrees.

While one of the University’s major selling points is its low tuition, college expenses are still a major concern to our freshmen. Forty percent say that chances are very good that they will be getting a job to help pay for these expenses but only 8.8 percent think they will have to work full-time at the same time as they attend college full-time.

Fifteen percent feel they most likely will change majors and another 13 percent feel that chances are very good that they will change career choices.

Forty-five percent are pretty sure they will be satisfied with MSU and only 5.9 percent say there is a very good chance that they will transfer to another college. A very small percent, 1.3, think they will stop out along the way and 1.8 percent think there is a very good chance that s/he will permanently drop out of higher education.

And finally, bringing us full circle to the first report that pointed out increased levels of stress in freshmen, 11.1 percent say there's a very good chance that they will seek personal counseling.

How Will Freshmen Finance Their College Education?

As we saw in an earlier report, low tuition is one of MSU's important selling points to freshmen. Respondents were asked if they had any concern about their ability to finance their college education. Only 27.6 percent said they had no concern, and that they were confident they would have sufficient funds. As many as 54.8 percent said they had some concern, but felt they probably would have enough funds to make it through college. But 17.6 percent said they had major concerns about financing their college education.

Two other questions also explored educational expenses. One asked how much of the first year's educational expenses (room, board, tuition and fees) would be covered by various sources. The responses to this first question are summarized in Table 8. The major sources of college funding are: parents, oneself (in terms of personal savings and employment while attending college), and the university (as a source of financial aid- college-offered scholarships and grants and federal/state loan/grant programs). Whichever college type we look at, parents are the main economic source for first year freshman educational expenses. MSU freshmen, however, count somewhat less on their parents than those in the national sample or similar medium-selective colleges. All students say that summer work savings are the second most important source of monies for college expenses. For MSU freshmen these monies too are somewhat less of a source for college. The survey did not ask any further questions about this topic but we do know from the first report that MSU freshmen are somewhat less affluent than those in the comparator group. Perhaps their summer earnings are put to more basic uses such as rent or to meet personal needs. Also of note is the similarity between MSU freshmen and the two other comparator groups for almost all loan and grant programs. The exception to this is the smaller percent, 12.6, of MSU freshmen saying they expect to have a college grant or scholarship as a source for college funding compared to 23.1 percent for other medium-selective institutions and 29.4 percent for the national sample.

The second question asked about sources contributing the sum of \$1,500 or more to a student's first year of college. Table 9 summarizes these responses and confirms the sources found in the previous table. Half cite parents as the major source of first year funding in the amount of \$1,500 or more. Monies from parents are supplemented by funds from many other sources. Again MSU students do not have as much money from savings available as other students do nor do they cite college grants or scholarships as a source of funding as frequently as other freshmen do.

Table 8 Percent Reporting Sources of Their First Year College Expenses

% Saying This is a Source

	Montclair State University			4 Yr Med Sel	Nat'l
	Male	Female	Total	Total	Total
Any amount:					
Parents, other relative or friends	69.9%	68.5%	69.0%	83.9%	79.7%
Savings from summer work	38.1	37.8	37.9	59.5	50.7
Part-time job off campus	28.0	30.1	29.3	32.8	28.0
Other savings	24.2	23.4	23.7	39.5	35.2
Stafford Loan (GSL)	23.5	21.9	22.5	19.1	24.4
Part-time job on campus	15.2	20.0	18.2	27.6	23.6
State scholarship or grant	18.0	17.3	17.6	20.8	18.9
Pell Grant	17.0	17.1	17.1	16.4	20.0
College grant/scholarship (other)	13.1	12.3	12.6	23.1	29.4
Other private grant	10.0	9.0	9.4	9.0	11.2
Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)	8.7	8.4	8.5	5.9	6.1
Other college loan	7.3	7.9	7.7	12.2	11.3
College work-study grant	6.9	7.3	7.2	10.0	12.4
Other loan	8.0	5.4	6.4	8.2	7.8
Full-time job while in college	7.3	4.2	5.3	4.4	4.9
Perkins Loan	7.3	2.5	4.3	6.7	8.9
Other than previously listed	4.8	3.8	4.2	5.2	5.4
Other gov't. aid (ROTC, BIA, GI/military benefits)	5.9	1.7	3.3	2.6	3.1
Spouse	3.8	1.0	2.1	0.7	1.2
Vocational rehabilitation funds	3.1	0.6	1.6	0.5	1.1

Table 9 Percent Reporting This as a Source of \$1,500+ for Their First Year College Expenses

% Saying This is a Source

Source for \$1,500 or more:	Montclair State University			4 Yr Med Sel	Nat'l
	Male	Female	Total	Total	Total
Parents, other relative or friends	48.8%	50.9%	50.1%	58.2%	53.6%
Spouse	1.0	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.3
Other savings	4.8	5.2	5.1	8.5	8.3
Savings from summer work	4.8	3.1	3.8	10.3	9.0
Part-time job off campus	4.5	2.3	3.1	3.8	2.9
Full-time job while in college	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.5
Part-time job on campus	1.7	0.8	1.2	2.6	2.6
Stafford Loan (GSL)	8.7	7.7	8.1	9.2	12.4
Other college loan	3.8	4.0	3.9	6.9	6.7
Other loan	3.1	2.1	2.5	4.6	4.7
Perkins Loan	2.4	0.8	1.4	1.6	2.9
College grant/scholarship (other)	4.5	5.0	4.8	9.7	17.2
Pell Grant	4.5	2.7	3.4	4.9	6.1
State scholarship or grant	3.5	2.5	2.9	4.4	4.9
Other private grant	2.1	2.5	2.3	2.0	3.6
Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)	1.4	1.0	1.2	0.6	1.2
Other gov't. aid (ROTC, BIA, GI/military benefits etc.)	2.4	0.2	1.0	1.2	1.7
College work-study grant	0.3	0.0	0.1	1.3	1.8
Vocational rehabilitation funds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3
Other than above	1.4	0.4	0.8	2.2	2.6

5/1/00